

THE MID CHESHIRE LINE IN ASSOCIATION
WITH NICKY THOMPSON



My Cheshire POSTER AWARDS

Teacher Resource...

The My Cheshire Poster Awards were created as a response to the Coronavirus epidemic and the effect this has had on our schools.

At its heart it is a simple Cheshire-based art project designed to be easily completed at home. However, the following pages and links will enable teachers and parents to develop the project into something a little more involved if they so wish; by adding in elements of social history. Maybe it could become a research project or even an illustrated journal!

Whatever direction you take we hope that you and your children enjoy taking part.



nickythompsonart.co.uk/mcpcomp





The Golden Age of the Railway

by Sally Buttifant MBE

The coming of the railway transformed lives and society.

It changed everything, from what we ate - fresh food could be moved from field or sea to the city quickly - to how we spent our spare time.

Coal could be transported over longer distances more cheaply, and this heralded the start of tourism for the masses – by train!

The railway companies were competing across the ever-growing network for freight and passengers. Fortunes had been invested and shareholders needed their dividend, therefore it was important to encourage people to take the train and make the most of opportunities to visit the coast, explore the countryside and to escape from the towns and cities. From crude handbills and dull timetable posters to lively, colourful works of art, the age of the railway travel poster began.

A new visual language was deployed to entice travellers. Striking images by artists like Frank Henry Mason presented a vibrant new vision of Britain. At the launch of 'Marvellous Days Out' in 2017, Pete Waterman said "The sun is always shining in these posters."

Places like Chester capitalised on the railway age with posters encouraging people to visit and enjoy the delights of the Groves, the Race Course, the Cathedral and Grosvenor Park.

Thousands would take the Mid Cheshire Line from Manchester to enjoy the fresh air and promenade along the banks of the Dee. Others would change at Chester station to take the Sand Train down the North Wales Coast to enjoy the sea, historic castles, miles of golden sand, and of course fish and chips!

We now enjoy days out by car as well as by train but our enthusiasm for nostalgic rail travel artworks has not dimmed.

When Nicky created the 1930s style poster for the Salt Works at Lostock Gralam, it was impossible to stop at one – Cheshire attractions deserve their own 21st century travel art – and we couldn't have envisaged the passion of people from around the world who wanted to own a piece of Marvellous Days Out iconic art.

So it is exciting now to see the Made in Chester artwork – inspired by Chester, created in Chester and exhibited in Chester.

#marvellous



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Artist Statement

From the programme for the Made In Chester exhibition at the Grosvenor Museum

These 24 artworks are the distillation of 3 years' work.

They started life as a single poster for the Lion Salt Works under the banner of 'Marvellous Days Out' promoting the Mid Cheshire Line.

One poster became three, then 12; then we got a little bit of attention and national commissions arrived from the likes of Virgin, Arriva, CrossCountry, London Northwestern, Tatton Park, Marketing Cheshire, The North Cheshire Community Rail Partnership and an array of private clients.

I have now designed over 60 artworks in this style, with more planned for 2020.

The original inspiration for these posters was the work of artist Frank Henry Mason, who redefined the genre.

A gifted maritime watercolourist, he quickly learned that the gallery of the station platform was a very different proposition to the conventional salon style gallery he was accustomed to.

He replaced detail and technical sophistication for brilliant, vibrant swathes of flat colour and in doing so created a new visual language that is very much part of Britain's rich cultural and aesthetic history.

I was asked recently by a journalist why I thought this style of artwork was still popular.

This was my answer...

'The artworks, for me, operate on two levels; firstly they present our landscape using a rich and beautifully intense palette and people warm to the immediacy of these nostalgic images in a very visceral way. In addition I also think there is something more fundamental going on, in that these works also contain an honesty (or integrity) that I think we have lost in the way we communicate with each other and certainly in the way advertisers speak to us. The poster says, 'Come to Chester because it's beautiful', and it is beautiful! There is no hard-sell here, no small-print and no catch.

It's refreshingly straightforward.'

The lesson for me as a visual communicator was profound; the realisation that a simple story told well is both powerful and compelling.

These artworks are just simple stories that (I hope) are told well.

I hope you enjoy them.

Nicky Thompson,

Chester, November 2019



nickythompsonart.co.uk/mcpcomp



NICKY THOMPSON
EXHIBITION

MADE IN CHESTER

AN EXHIBITION OF 1930s INSPIRED ARTWORKS OF CHESTER
AND THE SURROUNDING AREAS

9TH NOVEMBER 2019 - 15TH MARCH 2020
GROSVENOR MUSEUM, CHESTER

www.grosvenormuseum.westcheshiremuseums.co.uk



Atkinson
ACCOUNTS



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Some Useful Links...

nickythompsonart.co.uk

marvellousdaysout.org.uk

midcheshirerail.org.uk

chesterzoo.org

frankhenrymason.com

railwayposters.co.uk

railwaymuseum.org.uk

darnleyfineart.com/artists/wilkinson

rail.co.uk/british-railway-history

grosvenormuseum.westcheshiremuseums.co.uk

railart.co.uk



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